REMARKS

Claims 1-11 remain pending. Claims 1-8, 10, and 11 are amended. No claims are canceled or added.

The Office Action indicates that claims "1-5" are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as indefinite. However, in the context of paragraph number 3 on page 2 of the Office Action, it seems that only claims "1-4" were intended to be rejected.

The Office Action indicates that "said network device" in line 3 of claim 1 lacks antecedent basis. Now, though, claim 1 is amended so that the quoted phrase is replaced with "a network device". Thus, the statement in the Office Action no longer applies.

Because claims 2-4 depend from claim 1, applicant can infer that those claims are rejected because of their dependency from claim 1. However, claim 5 is independent of claims 1-4, so it seems that no rejection of claim 5 was intended, especially in view of the fact that the Office Action provides no reason for the rejection of claim 5.

Based on the above explanations, withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection is now solicited.

Claims 1-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Levi (U.S. Patent No. 6,658,586) in view of Shimura (U.S. Patent No. 5,758,041). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

The rejection relies on Levi, the primary reference, to teach a portion of the claimed subject matter, and the rejection also relies on Shimura, the secondary reference, to suggest modifying the technology disclosed in Levi to have the remainder of the claimed subject matter. However, as detailed below, the Office Action does not fully explain why, given the technology already described by Levi, one skilled in the art would be motivated to add the additional

elements of Shimura, regardless of what the Shimura disclosure itself describes. Applicant elaborates as follows:

First, regarding claims 1-4, base claim 1 describes a method for managing a plurality of "network devices" that includes the step of setting "identification information" to a network device by assigning identification information to the device. The claim specifies that the identification information is set by means of "management equipment." The method of claim 1 also includes the step of:

outputting said identification information visually on said network device.

Claims 2-4 depend from claim 1, so they also include this subject matter.

The Office Action does not completely indicate that how Levi, the primary reference, supposedly discloses subject matter that is recited in the claims. Instead, the Office Action merely cites the Abstract, column 2, lines 5-19, and the paragraph bridging columns 8 and 9. Applicant acknowledges that Levi discloses a method for tracking devices subject to theft (Abstract), and an element called a "device status exception sentinel" is installed on a monitor server, which monitors the status of devices (column 2, lines 4-9).[1] Levi discloses further generating a "virtual device identifier" associated with respective monitored devices. (Column 2, lines 9-12.)[2] The Levi Fig. 1 further shows user devices 14, 16, 18, 20, and 22 networked via Internet 34 (a "network"). Fig. 15 shows a web monitor server 1101 connected via network 34 to a plurality of monitored devices 630.

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[1] Although the Examiner might be relying on the monitor server to anticipate the "management equipment" recited in the claims and on the devices to anticipate the "network devices," such understanding is never stated in the Office Action, so the Examiner's intent cannot be determined with certainty.

[2] Applicant can speculate that the rejection relies on the virtual device identifier to anticipate the "identification information." However, as stated previously, applicant cannot know for certain how the prior art is interpreted because such explanation is not provided in sufficient detail.

Regardless of whether the cited portions of Levi might teach (or at least suggest) some of the claimed subject matter quoted above, the Office Action clearly indicates that Levi does not teach "outputting said identification information visually on said network device" as claimed. Accordingly, the rejection relies on Shimura to suggest modifying the Levi method to include the step of displaying the identification information visually on Levi network devices. However, applicant finds no sufficient suggestion for this modification in the Shimura disclosure, and none is indicated in the Office Action. Applicant elaborates as follows:

The Shimura technology is non-analogous to the Levi technology. Instead of disclosing a method for tracking *devices* subject to theft, Shimura discloses a method (and apparatus) for preventing illegal copying of *data* sent from a host computer to a printer. (Column 1, lines 13-44.) Figs. 1 and 2 disclose a printer that has an operation panel 8 that includes an LED display. (Column 2, lines 46-47, and column 3, lines 8-9.) The printer displays an ID number on operation panel 8. (Column 3, lines 55-56.) A user provides the ID number the host computer to enable determination of whether data is authorized for transmission to the printer. (Column 3, lines 58, *et seq.*)

The Office Action states in the paragraph bridging pages 3 and 4 that it would have been obvious to modify the Levi method (and system) based on Shimura teachings "in order to print to a special printer only." However, the Office Action provides no explanation of how a user of the Levi system and method would supposedly be concerned with preventing unauthorized transmission of data to its network devices. Because Levi already discloses generating a "virtual device identifier" associated with respective monitored devices (see above), there would be no motivation to install an additional hardware element, a display, on a Levi network device to

enable a human operator to manually enter identification information. For at least this reason, the rejection of claims 1-4 is improper.

Regarding claims 5-8, base claim 5 recites subject matter that is analogous to the subject matter recited in claim 1. More specifically, claim 5 describes a network management system having a plurality of "network devices" connected to "management equipment" through a "network." The system allocates the management equipment for assigning and setting "identification information" to each network device. The claimed system further allocates:

> said plurality of network devices for visually outputting said identification information assigned thereto

[emphasis added]. Claims 6-8 depend from claim 5, so they also describe such a network management system.

As discussed above, Levi does not teach a network device for visually outputting identification information as claimed, and Shimura does not really suggest modifying the Levi system so that its network devices would visually output identification information. For at least this reason, the rejection of claims 6-8 is improper.

Regarding claims 9-11, base claim 9 recites subject matter that is analogous to the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 5. More specifically, claim 9 describes network device management equipment for managing a plurality of "network devices" through a "network," and the equipment includes a "management unit" for assigning and setting "identification information" to each network device. The claim originally recited that the effect of this assigning and setting is:

> ... to output visual indication onto said network device.

As shown above, applicant amends this quoted text as follows: "... to output ~~visual indication~~ visually said identification information onto said network device." Now, this recitation resembles the analogous portions of claims 1 and 5.

Claims 10 and 11 depend from claim 9, so they also describe such network device management equipment with the features quoted above. For at least the reason that Levi does not teach a network device visually outputting identification information, and that Shimura does not adequately suggest modifying the Levi system so that its network devices would visually output identification information, the asserted prior art cannot render claims 9-11 unpatentable.

For at least the reasons provided above, applicant submits that the obviousness rejection should be withdrawn.

If for any reason the Examiner decides to maintain the rejection or to issue a new rejection based on other prior art, applicant requests that the next Office Action clearly indicate a correspondence between elements disclosed in the prior art and elements recited in the claims. The mere citation of blocks of text as generally encompassing all claimed subject matter does not provide the needed correspondence.

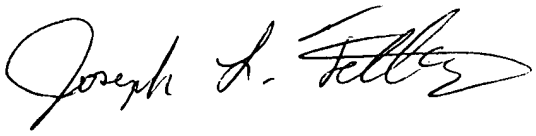
Also, if the Examiner decides to maintain the present rejection, applicant requests a clear description of why a user of the Levi system and method would supposedly be concerned with an the addition of more hardware to prevent the unauthorized transmission of data to its network devices in view of the fact that Levi already discloses generating a "virtual device identifier" associated with respective monitored devices. (For this reason, there would be no motivation to install a display on the Levi network device to enable a human operator to manually enter identification information.)

In a separate matter, applicant provides minor amendments to the claims to change punctuation and grammar so that the claims would conform more closely to typical U.S. practice.

In view of the remarks above, applicant now submits that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowability is hereby requested. If for any reason it is believed that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact applicant's undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, applicant petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension, or any other fees which may be due, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,
WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP



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